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ON IGNORANCE.

'THERE is no darkness but ignorance,' is a profound saying of one of our profoundest thinkers. Ignorance in the mental, moral, or physical world, is the darkness wherein man thinks and works until he has gained, or been given, light that is knowledge. As a child, he tries with his infant touch everything within his reach, drawing back oftentimes with a cry of surprise and pain at what he encounters. As a man, he works towards the light, testing and trying this or that course of action—often drawing back, stung or pained; and the exclamation, 'What a fool I have been, to be sure!' is the cry of his heart or conscience.

So essential is knowledge—or, as we say, wisdom—to carry a man safe through the snares and pitfalls of life, that, as a matter of course, this wisdom has many counterfeits, pretended wisenesses, which, like false guides or incompetent pilots, themselves constitute not the least of his dangers. But for their misguidance, he might perhaps, by dint of keeping his eyes open, have floated on, with here a rub against a rock, and there a shove-off from a shoal, weathering the storm pretty successfully. Whereas, with the false pilot, Cunning, on board, lulling his watchfulness with a delusive sense of safety, or flattering his vanity into overweening self-confidence, poor Ignorance is pretty sure to become involved in the intricacies of a short-cut to wealth or wisdom, and damage or shipwreck is an incident of the voyage. And when the disaster is imminent, and wreck apparently inevitable—when the chances of saving life are at their lowest, and organised effort has nearly ceased, then Cunning finishes the work of Ignorance with the selfish cry of *saute qui peut*—each one for himself, and deuce take the hindmost; and that place he, the ignorant, the cunningly selfish, is resolved shall be, at any cost, not his. Of a friendship that will keep faith under such circumstances, will wait for, hold out a helping hand to—risk even its own chance of rescue in order to preserve a comrade

—Ignorance, and its adviser Cunning, know as little as of the lifelong if secret self-reproach which many a man, who has deserted, from whatever motive, a friend in his hour of need, carries silently with him into his grave. What a genuine thief's maxim it is, that 'Every man for himself!'—clutching always at a momentary fancied benefit to itself, no matter at whose expense, only to fall a little sooner, a little later, into the hands of the officer.

'Every man for himself,' says the phoenix financier, rising from the ruins of companies, heedless of the sobs of the women, the execrations of the men, he has helped to ruin, in their ignorance; to recall and ponder over them, perhaps, in the silent night-watches of a sleepless old age. 'Every man for himself'—it is the quintessence of smartness and wide-awakeness to the ignorant egotist hurrying to grow rich, who, without knowing it, has entered a *cul-de-sac* whence there is no egress, and where he will one day awake to find himself—as in a prison—alone.

But it is not merely this pinchbeck knowledge, this wisdom for a man's self alone, that misleads Ignorance and frustrates its own object. There is a fatal superabundance of resource, a too keen and anxious foresight, which will sometimes lend itself to defeat. In the later part of Napoleon's career, for instance, when providing, as he calculated, against every contingency that could by any possibility arise, he foresaw and calculated on everything except the stupidity of his enemies. Thus, perceiving too clearly the weak points in his plans, which his adversaries were by no means clever enough to discover, Napoleon weakened his whole design by providing against surprises which were obvious only to a general of genius equal to his own. This is precisely the mistake of many a chess-player, who is too careful to guard every avenue which he sees—but which his opponent does not see—may be attacked, to leave himself enough strength for an efficient assault.

A contrary form of ignorance is well indicated by the proverb which bids us 'Beware of "If I had wist"'—beware, that is, of the man, or woman,

who cannot look forward, who cannot weigh consequences, or perceive 'what will follow out of what,' on whose lips are perpetually the words, 'If I had only known!' Yet this conscious nescience, which cries out upon itself, is hardly so dangerous as the sublime pedantry which closes its eyes in tranquil assurance and says, 'I know'—not I think, or I imagine, or I hope, but 'I know.' The reflection that the ignorance of one age condemns that which is cried up for wisdom in the succeeding age, might tend to subdue this infatuation. But two centuries since, a lady's will—that of Lady Glanville—was disputed on the ground of her ladyship's alleged lunacy at the time it was executed, the allegation in support of her lunacy resting mainly on the fact that her ladyship collected insects and was fond of observing their habits. Imagine, years hence, any one attempting to upset the testament of Sir John Lubbock on such grounds!

And Ignorance has been at all times but too apt to attribute wickedness to what is new to it and what it finds it difficult to understand. Many respectable people thought it wicked to travel at the rate of twenty or thirty miles an hour, when railways were first invented; it was new, it was incredible, it was 'flying in the face of a Providence that had not endowed us with wings.'

As with individuals, so with nations. The Chinese have for ages been wise for themselves only. Sixteen centuries ago they possessed a seismometer, displaying a philosophical insight into the action of earthquakes, and bearing a close resemblance to modern instruments; to-day, they close a coal-mine, and insist that it shall not be worked, lest it let loose the 'Earth-dragon,' whatever that may be. Age after age has passed in a shut-up, selfish, wise-in-their-own-conceit fashion; Celestials to themselves, to other nations the slavish victims of pagan prejudices, neither giving nor receiving the benefits of the mutual exchange of knowledge with the rest of the world. As with nations, so with individuals. An egotistical miser, living on in the house in which he was born, scraping a fortune together by the exercise of a persistent regard for his own interests alone, an ingenious reaping of small advantages, unneighbourly, niggardly, never by any chance entertaining angels unawares, because never entertaining strangers at all—this man, though a born and bred Britisher, is in his ignorance and prejudices what the heathen Chinese nation has been for centuries among the nations.

One form of ignorance, very telling upon the patience of those among whom it appears, is the ignorance displayed in conversation by one who neither knows nor cares, so long as he can hear the sound of his own most sweet voice, whether his auditors are equally satisfied with himself, with the subject on which he has chosen to dilate. He has, primarily, no idea of conversation but as a monologue. As a miser probably began to save with an object, and ends by making an object of saving, so the talker begins by talking perhaps with an idea, and ends by having no idea save talking. If your interest and attention unavoidably flag, he will pause to say, 'But perhaps I weary you?' Perhaps! And he takes your mournful 'By no means' in its entirety, and the monologue is resumed with even renewed vigour.

Pausing upon this exhibition of ignorance of, and possibly indifference to, the feelings of others, we can more readily forgive another shape of blindness made manifest in a stolid reserve. Your reserved man only vouchsafes a monosyllable in reply to any observation you may hazard. Whoever ventures on a 'duel of silence' with him will infallibly be worsted. Wrapped in his self-containing mantle, he stalks abroad among his fellows, admired by the eager and loquacious for a reticence they cannot emulate; and feared, because not understood. Should years or accident bring to light the qualifications of the taciturn man, his reticence will sometimes be found to have covered not shyness, or modesty, or prudence, or caution, but a vacuum: he has been very reserved about nothing at all; but that he found a very good covering for his ignorance, we must admit.

It is ignorance that, as we have said, is prone to attribute evil or wrong to the thing, or person, unknown to itself. Wilfred Osbaldistone's objection to his cousin was founded on the fact that he had 'a strange outlandish binding on's castor.' Hundreds entertain a dislike for a new-comer for no more solid reason, perhaps, than the cut of his whiskers. Even the very appearance of those involuntary adjuncts is said to be so obnoxious to the fine sensibilities of the undergraduates of a certain university, that they will insist on their removal from the harmless, if hirsute, face of a comrade, yea, even denude him of them with their own hands if necessary. 'I've only seen the back of his head, but I hate him'; this, though ludicrous enough from the lips of a Dundreary, is the very note, in a different disposition, of the sullen scorn of ignorance. And, start the dislike, depreciate callously and calmly, but persistently, clinch it with a nickname, and you may as well hang the dog, says the proverb most truly, to whom an ill-name has been given. 'He has a hangdog look'; no doubt he has, for he feels acutely the doubtful looks that are cast at him. How can he be frank or free in his conduct, poor brute! when suspicion gleams on him from every eye? How can he graciously and joyously wag a tail, which his conviction of the unjust scepticism with which he is regarded keeps permanently depressed?

We ventured above to take exception to the thief's maxim, 'Every man for himself'; but the wit of one and the wisdom of many—as proverbs are proverbially said to be—is nobly vindicated in a saying which the ignorant—and we are all of that class—would do well to bear in mind, 'Tout savoir c'est tout pardonner.' Ignorance would lose half its venomous quality if it could be brought to own that it does not, that it cannot by any possibility 'know all' about even its nearest neighbour, who has maybe affronted it; and that, if it could by a revelation, once arrive at that complete knowledge, a conviction of that neighbour's pardonableness must be the result.

To conclude—as there is no darkness but ignorance, so a very safe way of continuing in darkness is to declare to ourselves and others that we have got light and can see; by this means we can effectually deprive ourselves of any redundant side-lights which might have been afforded us by any more open-eyed or better spectaclled

than ourselves; and we may remain securely to the end of our days in that state of blissful ignorance which it would be folly to exchange for wisdom, according to the saying of a certain successor of Solomon.

THE IVORY GATE.*

By WALTER BESANT.

CHAPTER XXXI.—CHECKLEY SEES A GHOST.

To Checkley, watching every evening, though not always at the same time, sooner or later the same discovery was certain to come. It happened, in fact, on Friday evening, the day after Athelstan shook hands with Mr Edmund Gray. On that night he left the office between six and seven, walked to his lodgings in Clerkenwell, made himself a cup of tea, and hurried back to Gray's Inn. Here he planted himself, as usual, close to the passage in the north-east corner of South Square, so that he could slip in on occasion and be effaced. Like many of the detective tribe, or like the ostrich, fount of many fables, he imagined himself by reason of this retreat entirely hidden from the observation of all. Of course the exact contrary was the result. The Policeman regarded him with the liveliest curiosity: the laundresses watched him daily: the newspaper vendor came every evening from the gateway to see what this ancient spy was doing, and why he lurked stealthily in the passage and looked out furtively. He was one of the little incidents or episodes which vary the daily routine of life in the Inn. Many of these occur every year: the people who come to their offices at ten and go away at five know nothing about them: the residents who leave at ten and return at six or seven or twelve know nothing about them. But the Service know: and they talk and conjecture. Here was an elderly man—nay, an old, old man, apparently eighty years of age. What did he want, coming night after night to hide himself in a passage and peer out into the Square? What, indeed? The Policeman, who had done duty in Hyde Park, could tell instructive stories from his own experience about frisky age: the laundresses remembered gentlemen for whom they had 'done,' and pranks with which those gentlemen amused themselves: but no one knew a case parallel to this. Why should an old man stand in the corner and secretly look out into the Square? He generally arrived at half-past seven, and he left his post at nine, when it was too dark to see across the Square. Then he went to the *Salutation* and enjoyed society, conversation, and a cheerful glass, as you have seen.

The time he chose was unfortunate, because Mr Edmund Gray, when he called at his Chambers, generally did so at half-past six or seven, on his way to the Hall of Science, Kentish Town. Therefore, Checkley might have gone on watching for a long time—say an æon—watching and waiting in vain. But an accident happened which rewarded him richly for all his trouble. It was on Friday. Elsie, provided by this time with a latchkey to the Chambers, arrived at Gray's Inn at six. She was going to spend

the evening with the Master. She walked in, ascended the staircase—Mr Gray had not yet arrived—opened the door, shut it behind her, and entered the room.

The hand of woman was now visible in the general improvement of the room. The windows were clean and bright: the wainscoted walls had been cleaned: the ceiling whitewashed: the carpet had been swept and the furniture dusted: there were flowers on the table: there was an easel, on which stood Elsie's fancy portrait of Mr Dering, so wonderfully like Mr Gray—a speaking likeness: books lay about the table—they were all books on the Labour Question: on the Social Question: on the Problems of the Day: all the books on all the questions with which men now torture themselves, and think thereby to advance the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. There were new curtains, dainty curtains, of lace, hanging before the windows; and window-blinds themselves were clean and new. Elsie looked about her with a certain satisfaction: it was her own doing, the work of her own hand, because the old laundress was satisfied to sit down and look on. 'At the least,' she said, 'the poor dear man has a clean room.' Then she remembered that in a day or two she would leave him to his old solitude, and she sighed, thinking how he clung to her and leaned upon her, and already looked upon her as his successor—'a clean room,' she said, 'when I have left him. Perhaps he will leave the room, too, and be all day long what he used to be.—Sane or mad? I love him best when he is mad.'

The table was covered with manuscripts. These were part of the great work which he was about to give to the world.

Elsie had never seen the room behind this. A guilty curiosity seized her. She felt like the youngest of Bluebeard's wives. She felt the impulse: she resisted: she gave way: she opened the door and looked in.

She found a room nearly as large as the sitting-room. The windows were black with dust and soot. She opened one, and looked out upon a small green area outside, littered with paper and bottles and all kind of jetsam. The floor of the room was a couple of inches deep with dust: the chairs and the dressing-table were deep in dust. The bed was laid, but the blankets were devoured by moths: there was not a square inch left whole. It looked as if it had been brought in new and covered with sheets and blankets and so left, the room unopened, the bed untouched, for the ten years of Mr Edmund Gray's tenancy.

Between the bedroom and the sitting-room was a small dark room, containing a bath, a table for washing up, knives and forks in a basket, teacups and saucers.

'The pantry,' said Elsie, 'and the scullery, and the housemaid's closet, all together. Oh! beautiful! And to think that men live in such dens—and sleep there contentedly night after night in this lonely, ghostly old place. Horrible!' A rattling behind the wainscoting warned her that ghosts can show themselves even in the daytime. She shuddered, and retreated to the sitting-room. Here she took a book and sat by the open window, heedless of the fact that she could be seen by any one from the Square.

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It was seven o'clock before Mr Edmund Gray arrived. 'Ah! child,' he cried tenderly, 'you are here before me. I was delayed—some business. What was it? Pshaw! I forget everything. Never mind—I am here; and before we take a cab, I want you once more to go through with me the points of my new Catechism. Now, if you are ready.'

'Quite ready, Master.'

At half-past seven Checkley arrived at his corner and took a preliminary survey of the Square. 'There he is,' said the Policeman. 'There he is again,' said two laundresses conversing on a doorstep. 'There he is as usual,' said the newspaper man. 'Now,' asked all in chorus, 'what's he want there?'

Mr Checkley looked out from his corner, saw no one in the Square, and retreated into his passage. Then he looked out again, and retreated again. If any one passed through the passage, Checkley was always walking off with great resolution in the opposite direction.

Presently, in one of his stealthy peerings, he happened to look up. Then he started—he shaded his eyes: he looked his hardest. Yes; at the open window, freely displayed, without the least attempt at concealment, he saw the head and face of Miss Elsie Arundel. There! There! What more was necessary? Edmund Gray was Athelstan Arundel, or George Austin, or both—and Elsie Arundel was an accomplice after the act. There! There! He retreated to the seclusion of the passage and rubbed his hands. This would please Sir Samuel. He should hear it that very night. This ought to please him very much, because it made things so clear at last. There she was—up-stairs, in the Chambers of Mr Edmund Gray—in the very room! There! There! There!

Perhaps he was mistaken. But his sight was very good—for distant things. In reading a newspaper he might make mistakes, because he was one of those elderly persons who enjoy their newspaper most when they can nail it upon the wall and sit down to read it from the other side of a large room. He looked up again. The setting sun shining on the window of the side where he stood—the eastern side was reflected upon the windows of No. 22—Elsie's shapely head—she had taken off her hat—was bathed in the reflected sunshine. No doubt about her at all. There she was. There! There! There! The old man was fain to take a walk up Verulam Buildings and back again, to disguise his delight at this discovery. He walked chuckling and cracking his fingers, so that those who saw him—but there are not many in Raymond's Buildings on an August evening—thought that he must be either a little mad or a little drunk or a little foolish. But nobody much regards the actions of an ancient man. It is only the respect of his grandchildren or the thought of his possessions that gives him importance. Only the strong are regarded, and an old man who looks poor gets no credit even for foolishness and silly chuckles. Then Checkley went back to his corner. Oh! what was that? He rubbed his eyes again. He turned pale: he staggered: he caught at the doorposts. What was that? He shaded his eyes and looked again—bent and trembling and shaking all

over. Said the Policeman: 'Looks as if he's going to get 'em again.' Said the laundresses: 'He looks as if he'd seen a ghost.' The newspaper boy stepped half-way across the Square. 'He's looking at Mr Edmund Gray and the young lady. Jealous—p'raps—knows the young lady—wouldn't have believed it, prob'ly.'

Yes—Checkley was looking at that window. No doubt of that at all. He was not able to disguise his astonishment: he no longer pretended to hide himself. For he saw, sitting in the window, the young lady whom he believed to be an accomplice in the crime; and standing over her, with an expression of fatherly affection, was none other than Mr Dering himself.

Yes—Mr Dering. Most wonderful! What did it mean? Had Mr Dering resolved to clear up the mystery of Edmund Gray? Had he penetrated the Chambers and found there—not Edmund Gray—but Elsie Arundel?

'My friend,' said the Policeman, standing before him so that the view of the window was intercepted, 'you seem interested over the way.'

'I am. I am. Oh! yes. Much interested.'

'Well—don't you think you've looked at that old gentleman long enough? Perhaps he wouldn't like so much looking at. There's a young lady, too. It isn't manners to be staring at a young lady like a stuck pig.'

'No—no, Policeman—I've seen enough—thank you.'

'And, still talkin' in a friendly way, do you think Mr Edmund Gray over there would like it if he knew there was a detective or a spy watching every evening on the other side of the Square? What's the little game, guv'nor? Anything in our line? Not with that most respectable old gentleman, I do hope—though sometimes— Well—what is it? Because we can't have you goin' on as you have a been goin' on, you know.'

'Policeman'—Checkley pulled him aside and pointed to the little group at the window—'you see that old gentleman there—do you know him?'

'Certainly. Known him ever since I came to the Inn—two years ago. The people of the Inn have known him for ten years, I believe. That's Mr Edmund Gray. He's not one of the regular residents, and he hasn't got an office. Comes here now and then when he fancies the place—Mr Edmund Gray, that is. I wish all the gentlemen in the Inn were half as liberal as he is.'

'Oh! it's impossible! Say it again, Policeman. Perhaps I'm a little deaf—I'm very old, you know—a little deaf perhaps. Say it again.'

'What's the matter with the man?' For he was shaking violently, and his eyes stared. 'Of course that is Mr Edmund Gray.'

'What does the girl do with him? Why are they both there together?'

'How should I know why she calls upon him? She's a young lady, and a sweet young thing too. He's her grandfather likely.'

Checkley groaned.

'I must go somewhere and think this out,' he said. 'Excuse me, Policeman. I am an old man, and—and—I've had a bit of a shock and— Good-evening, Policeman.' He shaded his eyes again and looked up. Yes—there they

were, talking. Then Elsie rose, and he saw her putting on her hat. Then she retreated up the room. But still he stood watching.

'Not had enough yet, guv'nor?' asked the Policeman.

'Only a minute. I want to see her go out.—Yes—there they are—going out together. It is, after all—— Oh! there is no mistake.'

'There is no mistake, guv'nor,' said the Policeman. 'There goes Mr Edmund Gray, and there goes that sweet young thing along of him—Ah! there's many advantages about being a gentleman. No mistake, I say, about them two.—Now, old man, you look as if you'd had a surprise. Hadn't you better go home and take a drop of something?'

It was earlier than Checkley generally went to the *Salutation*. But he delayed no longer. He tottered across the Square, showing very much of extreme feebleness, looking neither to the right nor to the left, his cheek white, his eyes rolling. The people looked after him, expecting that he would fall. But he did not. He turned into the tavern, hobbled along the passage, and sank into an armchair in the parlour.

'Good gracious, Mr Checkley,' cried the barmaid as he passed, 'whatever is the matter?'

Some of the usual company were already assembled, although it was as yet hardly eight. The money-lender was there, sitting in his corner, taking his tobacco and his grog in silence. The decayed Barrister was there, his glass of old and mild before him, reading the morning newspaper. The ex-M.P. was there. When Checkley tumbled into the room, they looked up in surprise. When he gazed about him wildly and gasped, they were astonished, for he seemed like unto one about to have a fit.

'Give me something, Robert—give me something,' he cried. 'Quick—something strong. I'll have it short. Quick—quick!'

Robert brought him a small glass of brandy, which he swallowed hastily.

'Oh!' he groaned, sitting up, 'I've seen—I've seen'—

'You look as if you'd seen a ghost,' said the barmaid, who had come along with a glass of water. 'Shall I bathe your forehead?'

'No—no. I am better now—I am all right again.—Gentlemen'—he looked round the room solemnly—'I've seen this evening a good man—an old man—a great man—a rich man, gentlemen, wrecked and cast away and destroyed and ruined. With a little devil of a woman to laugh at him!'

'They don't generally laugh at the men when they are ruined,' said Mr Langhorne. 'They laugh while they are ruining them. It's fun to them. So it is to the men. Great fun it is while it lasts. I daresay the little woman won't really laugh at him. In my case'—

His case was left untold, because he stopped and buried his head in his newspaper.

Then Shylock spoke. He removed his pipe from his lips and spoke, moved, after his kind, by the mention of the words wreck and ruin, just as the vulture pricks up its feathers at the word death.

'To see a rich man wrecked and ruined, Mr Checkley, is a thing which a man may see every day. The thing is not to lose by their wreck—

to make money out of it. Rich men are always being wrecked and ruined. What else can you expect if men refuse to pay their interest and to meet their Bills? The melancholy thing—ah! the real sadness—is the ruin of a man who has trusted his fellow-creatures and got taken in for his pains. Only this morning I find that I've been let in by a swindler—a common swindler, gentlemen—who comes round and says he can't pay up—can't pay up—and I'm welcome to the sticks.—Which kind of man might your friend be, Mr Checkley, the man who's trusted his neighbour and got left—or the neighbour who's ramped the man that trusted him?'

'It isn't money at all,' Checkley replied.

'Then, sir, if it isn't money,' said the money-lender, 'I don't know why you come in frightening this honourable company out of their wits. If it isn't money, how the Devil can the gentleman be wrecked and ruined?'

For two hours Mr Checkley sat in silence, evidently not listening to what was said. Then he turned to Mr Langhorne the Barrister: 'You've known Mr Edmund Gray a long time, I believe?'

'Nine years—ten years—since he came to the Inn.'

'Always the same man, I suppose?' said Checkley. 'Never another man—not sometimes a young man—or two young men—one rather a tall young man, looks as if the world was all his—supercilious beast?'

'Never more than one man at once,' replied the Barrister with a show of forensic keenness. 'He might have been two young men rolled into one; but not to my knowledge: always the same man to look at, so far as I know—and the same man to talk with.'

'Oh! yes—yes. There's no hope left—none. He's ruined and lost and cast away and done for.'

He rose and walked out. The company looked after him and shook their heads. Then they drew their chairs a little closer, and the gap made by his departure vanished.

INFANTICIDE IN INDIA.

THE question of early marriages in India is one which has been before the public in this country a great deal of late, and in India itself it has been a question of very great moment, and has been the subject of legislation there. The discussion of this question has led to much attention being given to the position of women in India and the wrongs from which they suffer. Among these wrongs there is none more cruel than the crime of infanticide, for by that term is meant almost exclusively the destruction of female children. The writer of this paper, when in the service of the Government of India, had many instances of this crime brought to his notice, and a summary of the results he obtained is given below.

It would be wrong to suppose that this crime is prevalent in all parts or among all the people of India. Happily, it is not so, for it is only practised by the members of a few of the many castes, and chiefly among the Rajpoots, who were originally the warrior or soldier caste. How long this custom has existed cannot now be told, but there are indistinct traces of its having been

practised among the people living near the Indus, at the time of the invasion by Alexander the Great. However this may be, infanticide came almost suddenly into view in the year 1789, when Mr Jonathan Duncan was the British Resident at Benares. Mr Duncan obtained unequivocal admissions from the natives themselves as to the existence of the crime among them; but they did not admit the offence to be a very heinous one: their palliation for it then was the same that is offered now—namely, the intense pride of caste which prevents them from marrying their daughters to the sons of any tribe lower than their own. Among the Rajpoots is a sub-tribe called the 'Chohans,' and it is amongst them that the destruction of female offspring exists in the most marked way. If a Rajpoot did allow his daughter to grow up, he would be obliged to marry her before she came to the age of puberty, and to give with her a very handsome dowry; while, on the other hand, if it was a son, he could hope that he would live to get married and would bring a dowry to him.

Although a Rajpoot speaks of infanticide as only a venial offence, he does not claim any religious sanction for it: he knows, on the contrary, that his sacred books condemn the practice, as, for instance, it is mentioned in the *Brahma vaivartta Purana* that to kill a female is as criminal as to kill a Brahman, and one guilty of such is to suffer in *narka* or hell. The Rajpoots also admit that the crime is against all natural affection, and it is also known to be a terrible trial to the mothers to have their infant girls destroyed. Indeed, the harder task is assigned to the mother of not only giving an unwilling consent, but also that of aiding in the commission of the crime. Some of the wealthier Rajpoots in the North-west Provinces of India live in houses surrounded by a walled enclosure. This isolation from the nearest villages and neighbours has rendered the crime easier of concealment. Mr Charles Raikes in his *Notes on the North-west Provinces* has the following: 'At Mynpoorie there is an old fortress which looks far over the valley of the Eesun river. This has been for centuries the stronghold of the Rajahs of Mynpoorie—Chohans, whose ancient blood descending from the great Pirthee Raj and the regal stem of Neem Rana represents the *crème de la crème* of Rajpoot aristocracy. Here, when a son, grandson, or nephew was born to the reigning chief, the event was announced to the neighbouring city by the loud discharge of wall-pieces and matchlocks; but centuries had passed away and no infant daughter had been known to smile within these walls.' Mr Raikes gives the following supplement to his story, to show how the Government approved of the conduct of the Rajah who first preserved a female child: 'In 1845, thanks to the vigilance of Mr Unwin—a magistrate of the district who had exerted himself to put down infanticide—a little grand-daughter was preserved by the Rajah of that day. The fact was duly notified to the Government, and a letter of congratulation and a dress of honour were despatched from headquarters to the Rajah.'

Although the attention of judicial and police officers has been directed to this crime for many years, but little is known as yet as to the mode by which it is committed. It is not difficult

in any case to sever the bond to life in a new-born babe. As a Rajpoot, who was favourable to the cessation of infanticide among his clan, said, when pressed for an answer as to how the female children were killed: 'What is easier to destroy than the blossom of a flower.' It is believed that in the greater number of cases the child is left to die from want of nourishment; in many others, the death is effected by suffocation, and in a small number by poison.

Infanticide is diminishing because of the activity with which the suppression of it is pursued, and for the same reason the cases that escape judicial inquiry are now fewer. It is only with those into which an inquiry is made that any knowledge whatever can be arrived at as to how the death was accomplished. A part of the judicial inquiry may include a post-mortem examination by a medical officer, and as a result of this there may be a reference to a chemical expert, if there should be a suspicion of poison having been used. Of these cases, I am in a position to say that between the years 1873 and 1888, both years inclusive, two hundred and twenty-three cases of infanticide by poison were referred to me from the North-west Provinces and Oudh alone, and the result of my inquiries was to show that poison was detected in thirty-six of them. The poison detected was opium in thirty-four, and arsenic in two of them. In one of the latter, the poison had been administered with great clumsiness, as gritty particles of white arsenic were found adherent to the highly inflamed mucous membrane of the infant's stomach.

The number of cases in which opium was found gives a percentage of fifteen of all the cases referred. These numbers testify that poison is one of the modes of infanticide, and they also bring out that when it has been determined to kill by poison, opium is employed. The Rajpoots, then, had acquired this knowledge about opium, that it is out of all proportion more fatal to very young children than it is to adults. I need hardly add that all medical men know this fact very well. Concerning the administration of this drug for the purpose of infanticide, it is said there are two methods used, both of which exhibit a ruthless kind of skill: the one method is to smear the drug over the nipple of the mother, so that the child will imbibe the poison along with its mother's milk; the other is to spread on the roof of the child's mouth a little opium and allow it gradually to be dissolved and swallowed. This latter is probably the most frequent method employed.

No sooner was it discovered that infanticide was practised among the Rajpoots, than a means of suppressing it was sought for. Mr Jonathan Duncan, only a few months after his discovery, persuaded the Rajpoots around Benares, who were under British rule, to enter into a covenant by which they engaged themselves to abolish the crime. This, however, turned out a failure; for the crime was still rampant in the same part of the country in 1816; and the magistrates then stationed there—Messrs Fortescue, Smith, Shakespeare, and others—reported to the Governor-general of the day that infanticide still existed.

Mr Duncan, from being Resident at Benares, had been promoted to be Governor of Bombay,

and there he soon stirred up inquiries on the subject of infanticide, and the result was to find it was largely practised in Gujerat, Katch, and Kattiawar, among a tribe called the 'Jadehas,' who are nearly identical with the Rajpoots. In 1807, Major Alexander Walker was commissioned to make an extensive inquiry embracing the countries named above; and this officer did much to bring about a better state of things. In Northern India little was apparently done till the year 1841, when Mr Robert Montgomery (afterwards Sir Robert Montgomery, Lieutenant-governor of the Punjab), then magistrate of Allahabad, made a vigorous crusade against infanticide. He established the system, which, with modifications, is that which is still used for its suppression. His efforts were followed up by those of an officer already mentioned, Mr Unwin, the magistrate of Mynpoorie, who instituted a system of inspection in the villages of the district in which Chohan Rajpoots dwelt. This consisted in the village watchmen being called on to report the birth of a female child to the police, who, in turn, had to report to the magistrate. An order was then issued that one month afterwards the health of this child was to be again reported on; and if it became ill, it was to be seen by a police officer, who again reports; and if it died under suspicious circumstances, a post-mortem examination must be made by the civil surgeon of the district. The effect of this system of inspection was that in six years after its institution there were one thousand two hundred and sixty-three girls of six years and under living in the Chohan villages of the Mynpoorie District; while at the beginning of those six years there were none at all. In other words, at the end of 1843 there were no girls in those villages of Chohan parents; in May 1851 there were over twelve hundred of them. This statement gives some idea of the destruction of life that would have taken place had this able magistrate not interfered in the way he did.

The means taken to suppress female infanticide in later years are similar to those instituted by Mr Unwin. Since 1870, these measures have had the authority of a special Act of the Legislative Council of India, the Female Infanticide Act being Act VIII. of that year. This enactment was chiefly for use in the North-west Provinces. It gives power to the local Government to proclaim villages where the crime is known to be practised; and to entertain police in excess of the ordinary establishment, for the detection and prevention of the crime; and to keep registers of births, deaths, and marriages, or to take a census of suspected classes and persons, as well as other minor regulations. The working of the Act during the last twenty years has been attended with a great decrease of the crime, as may be seen from the following: In the Administration Reform of the North-west Provinces for 1881-82, the number of proclaimed villages was 2368; in the Report for 1883-84 it is said that the practice had been suppressed to a considerable extent, and was then confined to a very few families; in the Report for 1886-87 the crime was stated to be getting still rarer, and the number of proclaimed villages had gone down to 1573. It is also remarked that the custom of the father of the bride receiving a sum of money from the bride-

groom had been adopted, and was increasing. This in itself tends to diminish the temptation to infanticide. In the Report for 1887-88, it is said that the proclaimed villages were 1381, nearly two hundred fewer than in the previous year. It is also remarked that the alteration in the marriage custom just mentioned was at work, and producing favourable results, the crime still decreasing, so that hopes are entertained that it will soon disappear.

THE MAYOR OF SAWMILL FLAT.

CHAPTER II.—CONCLUSION.

THE reader doubtless inferred, when he discovered an Englishman of talent and refinement in the wildest frontier Territory of the United States, that such a man had his own good reasons for being there. The inference was a correct one. John Lee was a man with a history—an unpleasant history—and he went to South-western Arizona to begin life over again, and to 'grow up with the country.' The day after the town meeting, the remarks of the new settler anent jail-birds and the subsequent confusion of Dr Lee furnished the topic of conversation throughout the settlement. At the noon hour several miners and others gathered, as was their wont, in front of Andy Dunbar's store. Jim Hawkins, whose faith in Lee was still unshaken, was there and bore as long as he could the generally unkind remarks which fell upon his ear.

'Boys,' he said at last, 'you don't give the Doctor a fair shake. You've knowed Doc. Lee longer a good deal than you've knowed this feller Cadwell, and yet just because Cadwell gets up and makes some dirty remarks which ain't proven, not by a jugful, you jump on the Doctor with both feet. Wait and see what Lee has to say for himself. I'll just bet any of you lads an even thousand that Cadwell is a liar, and will crawl down from his perch. Here's the cash—who wants to cover it? Put up or shut up!'

The men felt somewhat ashamed of themselves, and no one cared to accept Hawkins' bet. The old man continued: 'There's just one thing I'll promise you, boys. If Cadwell can't or won't prove his words, Jim Hawkins is a-going to lick him clear out of Arizona. Yes, sir, that's what I'm a-going to do, Reeve or no Reeve; and if the Justice wants to have me arrested for assault, I'll pay a good round fine with pleasure.'

Jim Hawkins' blood was hot and his fingers tingled. He was an old Westerner, and had lived most of his life in communities where law and order were only theories. But the old Anglo-Saxon comes strongly to the surface in Western men, and his love of fair-play was as keen as his hatred for a slanderer or a coward. He felt that he could not wait a week to thrash Cadwell, so on his way home he stopped at John Lee's shanty. The Doctor was busy writing in the room that he called his surgery. There was a blank dull look upon his face, which did not brighten as usual at the sight of his friend, and neither of the two offered any greeting to the other.

'Doc,' said Hawkins shortly and excitedly, 'was you ever in jail?'

'Yes, Hawkins, I was.'

Those words cost John Lee his best friend, just when he needed him the most. If he had only qualified his reply, or if Hawkins had pursued his inquiry a little further with a view to learning particulars, the result would have been different. But no more words were spoken; and Jim Hawkins, shocked and disappointed, walked away to his mill with a faltering step. For if there was in Sawmill Flat that day a man with a heavier heart than John Lee carried, that man was honest Jim Hawkins.

That same night John Lee lay down as usual upon his rather hard couch, but he could not sleep. He lay awake, ruminating upon the mysterious ways of Providence and of mankind. He had never in his whole life done aught of which he need be ashamed; and yet he had been incarcerated for weeks in a prison, had been put upon his trial for murder, and acquitted only because of a persistent disagreement in three different juries which had been impanelled to try him. He had left his native land with the dark shadow of suspicion resting upon him—a shadow which he and his many friends were utterly powerless to dispel. Despairing of ever regaining his old standing in any English community, John Lee, hoping against hope that he might be justified in the sight of his fellow-men before death should claim him, emigrated to the Western world, and took up his abode upon the frontier of civilisation. And as he lay upon his sleepless bed, he could not but think how very small, after all, the world is. For he had travelled six thousand miles to escape the sneers and black looks of those who had mistrusted him, only, when Time was beginning to heal his wound, to find himself confronted by one of the men who verily believed him guilty of a foul crime.

Lee had seen this man Cadwell several times during the six months' residence of the latter at Sawmill Flat; and yet, although something about the man had always seemed familiar to him, he had, strangely enough, never made Darius Cadwell's acquaintance. But when, at the town meeting, the man arose and in hard tones utterly void of feeling asked the assemblage if they wished to elect a jail-bird or a murderer for their Mayor, Lee in a moment recognised him as a member of one of the juries that had tried him at the York Assizes.

Far into the night the doctor lay thinking upon the cruelty of his fate. It was two o'clock perhaps when he fell into a troubled doze, only to be awakened by a hammering upon the door of his shanty. He started up but half awake, and went to the entrance, almost expecting to see the cold-blooded juryman.

'What now?' he asked, loudly and roughly for John Lee.

The door was now open, and by the moonlight could be seen a man, haggard and weary and covered with dust. In the left hand he held the rein of a saddle horse, and Lee could see that both horse and rider had travelled a long distance.

'Air you Doc. Lee?'

'I am.'

'I'm from Rosario, near the Mexican line. It's seventy miles from here. We've got the yellow fever—got it bad. The town's picketed, and I'm the last man out. We only had one doctor, and he died 'tending the first case. We heered you doctored yellow fever in Louisiany, two years ago. Is that right?'

'Yes, it is. I have seen a good deal of yellow fever.'

'Will you come down to our town and help us out, Doc?'

The man gasped his request as if he dreaded a negative reply. He was a rough specimen, but he realised that he spoke for dying men and women.

'Yes, I will—right off,' replied Lee, as he commenced to dress himself. 'How many cases when you left—and when did you leave?'

'Thirty cases and eight deaths already, boss. I left at four o'clock yesterday afternoon. Been riding ever since, and my mare's clean tuckered out.'

'Well, you just take a wash and then lie down for half an hour. Here is water and a towel. I've got a couple of good ponies out here at the back. I'll bring them round while you rest.'

Lee was wide awake by this time, and his professional interest was aroused. He had plenty to think of now besides his own troubles, and that suited John Lee. He set all that his modest larder contained before the tired messenger, and gave him a glass of whisky-and-water.

'Do you feel like doubling? Lee asked the man half an hour after his arrival.

'You bet I do, Doc. I'm made over, and I'm good for a hundred miles.—By the Lord, Doctor, you're the stuff, you are. I suppose you know, sir, that once you're in Rosario you can't get out?'

'Come on; never mind that. Let's start.'

Both men stepped outside where the ponies were waiting. Lee locked the door, and with a piece of chalk wrote upon it: 'Gone to Rosario—Yellow Fever.' Then they leaped into their saddles and cantered away.

The settlement or town of Rosario was a much larger place than Sawmill Flat, although the settlers were by no means so prosperous as those at the Flat. Rosario was now visited by that fearful scourge from which none of Uncle Sam's territory bordering on the Gulf and the Mexican line is altogether exempt. The terrible summer climate, the morasses and swamps, and the bad drinking-water, all lend their aid to the plague itself, which, when it once breaks out, flees before nothing but the winter frosts.

It was noon when Lee and his companion reached the 'dead' line of pickets, posted for quarantine purposes around the afflicted place by the people of the adjacent districts, and there the physician parted with his guide.

Lee was not at all fearful. He had himself suffered from the 'yellow jack' in a mild form; and he had afterwards been one of the most active and successful doctors when the scourge had visited New Orleans two years before. Of course he incurred some risks, but not so many as those who had never been attacked by the disease, or who knew nothing of the correct method for treating it.

He was a welcome arrival in that miserable community of dead and dying, and he plunged right into his work. Before dark he had visited every case, and had enrolled a corps of assistants to nurse the sick and to enforce the rules which he drew up to minimise the spread of the plague. By nightfall, too, he had forgotten for the time being his personal troubles and the existence of Darius Cadwell.

Besides Jim Hawkins, whose good-will he had now lost, John Lee had at least one other staunch friend in Sawmill Flat. This was none other than Jennie Dunbar, the belle of the settlement, and only child of the wealthy storekeeper and trader, Andy Dunbar. Perchance she loved the handsome and interesting Doctor; at all events, she much admired him, and, with a woman's instinct, believed that he was innocent of any such fearful crime as had been indirectly charged to him by Cadwell. Her acquaintance with Lee was very slight and superficial. Of course, in so limited a community they had met often; but Lee, for good reasons, which he had partially explained to Hawkins, had steadily and consistently refrained from paying any particular attention to the girl, who was very handsome, and, though spoiled by her father, possessed of much good common-sense. Now, this girl of twenty years knew well the value and good moral effect of an expression of sympathy and confidence; and she judged rightly that such an expression from herself to Dr Lee at this time would have an immense influence with 'the boys' of Sawmill Flat, who one and all admired the girl and esteemed her father.

Upon ordinary occasions, Jennie would have been the last to make any overtures to Lee or any other man for a closer acquaintance, but the present was not an ordinary occasion. Her father had just bought her a spirited horse, and on the very day of the town meeting a spick and span new buggy had arrived from St. Louis. She resolved to make this an excuse for inviting Lee to drive with her, knowing that if they two were seen riding together it would be a tacit but unmistakable intimation that she believed in Lee and counted him her friend. So, immediately after breakfast, on the morning that John Lee was riding hard and fast to fever-stricken Rosario, Jennie Dunbar drove out to the Doctor's shanty, and was the first to read the notice written in chalk upon the door.

The girl was not only surprised and disappointed; she was thunderstruck. She sat down upon the bench where the Doctor often smoked his pipe, and remained there some moments lost in thought. Then she looked at her watch. It was just seven o'clock. She sprang into the buggy and drove to her father's house, which she entered. In ten minutes she came out again with a small bundle in her hand, and behind her she had left a note for her father and mother. The bundle contained one cotton dress and a change of underwear. The note ran as follows:

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER—I have gone to Rosario to nurse the yellow-fever cases. I knew it was no use to ask your permission. But do not be angry; I want to do something useful. I feel sure that I shall come back soon and well; so don't worry.

JENNIE.

That night, Jennie Dunbar left her new horse and buggy with one of the quarantine guards, and passed through the dead line into Rosario to report at Dr Lee's headquarters as a volunteer nurse.

Jennie Dunbar was an impulsive girl; and as is the case with most young women of a similar nature, her impulses were usually good. Do not let it be supposed for a moment that her sudden trip to Rosario was a foolish escapade, nor yet merely a girl's tribute of love to the man who had well-nigh—if not quite—won her heart. She had longed over and over for such an opportunity as this; for Jennie Dunbar was not the sort of a girl to remain contentedly the spoiled favourite of a small frontier settlement. She wanted work, and work of a nature wherein she could display her sound judgment and her fearless spirit. Such work was now before her.

Lee shook hands with the girl, and cordially welcomed her. He was not an effusive man, but he was just as glad to see the familiar face of a woman whom he knew he might fully trust with his most critical cases.

'Your father and mother know of your coming of course?' remarked Lee.

'Yes,' replied the girl—which she believed, rightly, to be true enough by that time.

'Well, you take a rest, and I will assign you to work at daylight,' he said; adding, as he looked at his watch, 'it is now ten o'clock.'

It is not necessary here to detail the hard and weary life, full of both discouragement and cheer, which the Doctor and his nurses led during the next few weeks in that pest-smitten town. At first the number of patients increased steadily, and, notwithstanding all the efforts of Lee, each day found Death reaping a rich harvest. But in three weeks the climax was reached and the fresh cases became fewer.

When October arrived, the worn-out watchers at Rosario began to look eagerly for the first night-frost of autumn, however slight; for frost and yellow fever never dwell together.

During the long weeks the Doctor had become acquainted with well-nigh every man, woman, and child in Rosario; but there was one man who had carefully avoided Lee. This was an Englishman, who was taken down with the fever on the 1st day of October, and in forty-eight hours he was a doomed man. His tongue was swollen badly, but he managed to ask the Doctor how long he might expect to live.

'The chances are, my poor fellow, that you will have exactly twenty-four hours of life. Is there anything you wish done—any message to send to any one?'

'Yes, Doctor, I've got a message for the whole world, but most of all for you. Can't you guess who I am?'

A curious gleam played upon John Lee's face, and mingled feelings crowded his bosom as the truth dawned upon him. 'Good God!' he exclaimed. 'Yes, you are—you are Richard Dent!'

The dying man nodded assent. After a pause, in which to gain strength, the doomed victim asked: 'Did you ever suspect—er—er—anything, Doctor?'

'Suspect? Suspect? Why, Dent—I know

beyond the shadow of a doubt that you murdered the father of my betrothed bride.'

Again the man nodded. 'Yes, that's right. I didn't mean to, but I did, and I let you shoulder it all. I wasn't man enough to toe the mark and let you out, Doctor. You came mighty near—yes, you did—mighty near swinging for it. But I'll pay it all up pretty soon, Doc. Twenty-four hours you said, that's all.'

There was another pause, during which Lee gave Dent some medicine to relieve him a little.

'Why don't you tell the boys, Doctor? There's time to hang me yet. Those fellows would hang me or burn me, or a dozen like me, if you only say the word. There's time enough—twenty-four hours.'

'Bah!' replied Lee. 'I wouldn't hurt you. You've probably paid a big price already. Don't think about me, Dent: a dying man should make his peace with God—not with men.'

'There ain't a notary or a magistrate you could get, is there? I could make a—you know—yes, a deposition.'

'No; there's no one, and if there was one, I wouldn't bother. I must leave you for a while; but I will return soon. Your nurse is on the veranda.'

When John Lee left, by the front door, the house in which Richard Dent lay dying, Jennie Dunbar, who, unseen, had heard all, ran out at the back. As fast as she could go, she hastened to the picket line, which she reached at a spot where mounted messengers waited to do errands for the imprisoned people of Rosario.

'Two of you,' she said, quietly but quickly, 'start at once for Sawmill Flat. One of you find Jim Hawkins, and the other look for Darius Cadwell. Tell them that I, Jennie Dunbar, and Dr Lee both demand their presence on a matter of more than life and death. The yellow fever is not to stop them. Hurry, for God's sake, men! One thousand dollars apiece if you bring them here within twelve hours; and one hundred dollars extra for every hour saved from twelve. You know me—you know the Doctor: our promise is good.'

Before the last word was spoken, the two men were in the saddle galloping toward Sawmill Flat, and Jennie Dunbar began to count the minutes until their return. She had not intended to deceive them when she gave her order in Lee's name: she only did it to add weight, for scarcely a man in Rosario but would have deemed it an honour to make some sacrifice for the brave physician who had served them so well.

It was eight o'clock in the evening when the two messengers departed from Rosario: at five o'clock in the morning they were back with Hawkins and Cadwell—the former of whom had come willingly enough; the latter after some demur.

The anxious girl was waiting for them, and at once conducted them to the cottage where Richard Dent, in all the throes of the last stages of the fever, awaited his rapidly approaching end. They were none too soon, for the power of speech had already left him, and delirium would speedily set in.

Lee, who was in the room, was much surprised

when Hawkins and the others entered, and would have ordered them out. But Hawkins had been advised of what was necessary by Jennie.

'Excuse my rudeness, Doc,' he said; 'but I am here by virtue of my magisterial commission received from the Governor of Arizona.—Now, Cadwell, you ask questions of this poor cuss. I will listen.'

Cadwell at once began. 'Do you know anything of the murder of old Squire Bowes of Leyburndale, Yorkshire?'

Dent nodded.

'Did this man, Dr Lee, have aught to do with it?'

A shake of the head was Dent's reply.

'Do you know who did commit that murder?'

Again Dent nodded affirmatively.

'Can you tell us who did?'

The dying man nodded once more and feebly pointed his forefinger at himself.

'And your name is Richard Dent?'

Another nod.

'That will do, Cadwell,' said Hawkins, who now stood over Dent, 'Doctor, hold up the sick man's hand.'

Lee complied.

'Now, then,' said Hawkins, 'you solemnly swear that the murder of one Bowes at Leyburndale, Yorkshire, England, was committed by you, Richard Dent; and that John Lee was not a party to the act in any way, shape, or manner? That is the truth, so help you God?'

For the last time Dent nodded assent, and then all but the Doctor left the room.

Richard Dent was the last victim of the yellow fever at Rosario; but the quarantine was not removed for some weeks, during which time all the Sawmill Flat people were compelled to remain within the prescribed limits. Even when the dead line was wiped away, only Jim Hawkins and Jennie Dunbar returned to the Flat.

John Lee, worn out with his labours, went up into the mountains of Colorado to recuperate; while Darius Cadwell, after making an elaborate statement in writing, which he signed before a notary, decided that he might find elsewhere a more comfortable residence than his shanty at Sawmill Flat.

On the 1st day of January, John Lee was still at Denver, and there, about a week later, a letter from Jim Hawkins found him. The following is the letter, with all grammatical errors eliminated:

CITY OF SAWMILL FLAT, ARIZONA TERRITORY,
Jan'y 1st, 1889.

DEAR FRIEND—We have just held our election for Mayor. The boys nominated you, and we polled a full vote. You are elected by acclamation. Hurrah! How soon can you come and take hold of the City? All the boys send their regards.—Your friend, JIM HAWKINS.

Mayor Lee replied in person, for he at once went down to 'take hold.'

Whether or not the City of Sawmill Flat will ever attain the success anticipated by its progenitors is as yet an unsolved problem. But Dr John Lee is still its honoured Mayor, and he will without doubt do his best for his friends

and neighbours; while, if there is one person who approaches him in popularity it is his wife, who bears a striking resemblance to Jennie Dunbar.

RATS ON SHIPBOARD.

It was a very great while before the mariner came to realise that among the perils which beset his calling he must reckon the existence of rats on shipboard as by no means an insignificant one. That sailors have for centuries viewed the vermin with a superstitious eye is evident upon the testimony of many old writers. Shakespeare, in the *Tempest*, says:

A very carcass of a boat,
Nor tackle, nor mast—the very rats
Instinctively had quit it.

The reputation of the rat as an evil omen, therefore, is beyond question very ancient; but as a pest whose presence is a menace to the safety of life at sea the animal has earned a distinction which is quite modern. A most remarkable instance of the mischief which the creature is capable of doing came to light during the proceedings of a Naval Court of Inquiry held in August 1875 for the purpose of investigating the cause of the loss of the barque *Commodore*, of Hartlepool. The vessel, which was burnt at sea, had been loaded with a cargo of timber, and the fire broke out in the hold in a most mysterious manner. It was eventually proved, on the evidence of the entire crew, that beyond a shadow of doubt the outbreak was originated by a rat carrying off a lighted candle, which had stood in the fore-castle, and was presently missed by the sailors, and dropping it among the dry and resinous pine stowed below. The *Shipping Gazette*, in commenting upon this extraordinary case at the time, and speaking of the danger generally of rats on shipboard, said that 'they have caused the foundering of many ships by gnawing holes in the planking, or so eating away the inner sides of the wood as to leave very little for the straining of the hull to do in completing the aperture; they have been known to nibble the timber at the waterways until the wood was so thin as to admit rain-water through it; they will attack the bungs of casks and create leakage; find out the soft parts of the knees or lining, and make a passage for themselves from one part to another.' So fully has the danger of this now come to be recognised, that such contingencies are generally provided for in the insurance of wooden-built ships.

As one pair of rats will produce three or four dozen young ones in the course of a twelvemonth, it may easily be conceived that a sailing-vessel, loaded with a cargo likely to prove particularly attractive to the rodent quadrupeds, by the time she returns from an ambulating voyage around the world must be literally infested with the creatures. Various are the means of extermination employed. The owners of the big lines of steamships find it necessary to engage a regular rat-catcher; and on the return of each vessel, as soon as the freight has been discharged, he sets to work with all the science of his calling to remedy the nuisance. In a passage across the Atlantic and back again, occupying barely a

month, it is commonly found that the rats have increased so prodigiously, notwithstanding the ship sailed with an apparently clear hold, as to require a good-sized cart to remove the carcasses when the professional gentleman has made an end of his work. The common plan in use among shipmasters who do not aspire to the dignity of employing a regular rat-catcher is to smoke the animals out of the hold. Dana, in his admirable *Two Years before the Mast*, gives a good account of the manner in which this is done. He says: 'As the next day was Sunday, and a good day for smoking the ship, we cleared everything out of the cabin and fore-castle, made a slow fire of charcoal, birch bark, brimstone, and other materials on the ballast in the bottom of the hold, calked up the hatches and every open seam, and pasted over the cracks of the windows and the slides of the scuttle and companion-way. Wherever smoke was seen coming out, we calked and pasted, and, so far as we could, made the ship smoke-tight. The captain and officers slept under the awning which was spread over the quarter-deck; and we stowed ourselves away under an old studding-sail, which we drew over one side of the fore-castle. The next morning, we took the battens from the hatches and opened the ship. A few stifled rats were found: and what bugs, cockroaches, fleas, and other vermin there might have been on board, must have unrove their life-lines before the hatches were opened.'

It has frequently happened that ship-captains, finding their vessels whilst at sea overrun with rats to such a degree as to be a serious inconvenience, have attempted to deal with the nuisance by scattering poisons in the hold. The remedy has of course proved effectual, but in the end, far worse than the disorder; for the creatures, perishing at the bottom of the ship, naturally begin to decompose after being dead a little while, and then the vessel is haunted by a most villainous odour. Imagine a craft becalmed for days under a broiling equatorial sun, with hundreds of rats decaying among the inaccessible nooks and crannies of her hold! The origin of more than one marine pestilence might doubtless be traced to this cause.

Sailors have a novel rat-trap, which, we believe, was devised in the first instance by an old Jack as an amusement for the rest of the fore-castle. Its great charm is its perfect simplicity. An inverted box is placed upon the deck, one end of which is tilted upon a short stick that balances it, and attached to which is a piece of twine, leading into the hand of a seaman who lies stirless in his hammock with his eyes cautiously peering over the rim of it. Under the box are dropped a few crumbs of biscuit or a small cube of salt junk. Presently the rats in the forepeak beneath, finding all still overhead, venture up through the interstices between the timbers. The sight of their sharp snouts and small bright eyes is as cheering to the expectant sailor as the bob of the float is to an angler. By-and-by one of them spies the bait, and makes for it, when jerk goes the string, down comes the box, and the animal is imprisoned.

A writer in the *Nautical Magazine* tells a story of how a Yankee skipper contrived to free his ship from rats. Whilst he lay in port, he

discovered that one of the British ships then in the harbour had amongst her cargo a great quantity of cheese. He thereupon found an excuse for hauling over to her and mooring his own packet alongside. The next step was to procure a plank, smear it well with an odoriferous preparation of red herrings, and place it so as to lead through one of the ports on board the Englishman. The immediate result was a wholesale emigration of the rats from the American ship's hold to the cheese-laden vessel alongside.

The sagacity of the rat is not perhaps to be equalled by that of any other animal, the dog alone excepted. Their instinct in quitting a sinking ship is remarkable. Nor do they always rush up just as the vessel is settling down and leap blindly overboard in the manner generally supposed. Some years ago a ship whilst lying secured to a quay was run into and stove by another vessel. She was sinking rapidly, when a long trail of rats were observed very cautiously creeping along the hawsers which connected her with the wharf, and scampering away as hard as they could pelt for the shelter of a friendly warehouse the moment they touched the land. There is even more talent shown in this procedure than in the monkeys' manner of bridging a river.

The sea-going rat occasionally exhibits an extraordinary and most perilous desire to get at water. Some little while since, a vessel, then almost new, began to leak so seriously that she had to be docked before she could proceed on her voyage. It cost the shipwrights a long search to discover the weak spot; but at last they found that right aft, in the bilge, the rats had gnawed clean through the planking; and nothing kept the water from rushing in save the thin sheets of metal with which the vessel was sheathed. The leak was repaired and the ship sailed; but after a short time she began to make water again rapidly, leaving no doubt that the rats were still the cause of the mischief. Upon this the captain, wisely imagining that it must be thirst which drove the creatures to this expedient of nibbling away the timber, ordered a daily allowance of water to be placed for them upon the hatch-coamings in the 'tween-decks. This they were not very long in discovering; 'and never again,' concludes the captain, in telling the story, 'during all the while that I remained in the ship and carried out this plan were we troubled with any more leaks.'

All of us must recollect the story of the shipwright in the *Uncommercial Traveller* who bartered his soul to the devil for an iron pot, a bushel of tenpenny nails, half a ton of copper, and a rat that could speak; and how this rat was incessantly signifying the fact by repeating the melancholy refrain:

A lemon has pips,
And a yard has ships,
And I'll have chips!

"What are you doing, Chips?" said the rat that could speak.—"I'm putting in new planks where you and your gang have eaten old away," said Chips.—"But we'll eat them too," said the rat that could speak; "and we'll let in the water, and we'll drown the crew, and we'll eat them too." Chips, being only a shipwright, and

not a man-of-war's man, said: "You are welcome to it!"

It is perhaps a pity, seeing that the animals swarm to such a degree on board every variety of vessel, that some means of utilising them could not be devised. The first idea to naturally follow this reflection is, why not eat them? Let not the epicure shudder at the suggestion: one and all who, whether by necessity or curiosity, have partaken of the rat declare it to be by no means such an unsavoury morsel. The flesh when cooked is about the colour of a pigeon's, and of a flavour that combines with the tenderness and succulence of the rabbit the higher and more matured qualities of the hare. The famous Sir Sidney Smith entertained a high opinion of the delicacy of rats. 'He asserted,' says Lieutenant Parsons in his entertaining *Nelsonian Reminiscences*, 'that rats fed cleaner and were better eating than pigs or ducks; and agreeably to his wish, a dish of these beautiful vermin was caught daily with fish-hooks, well baited, in the provision hold, for the ship was infested with them, and served up at the captain's table. The sight of them alone took off the keen edge of my appetite.' No doubt, the feeling of disgust which exists against the idea of employing the rat for gastronomic purposes is largely due to the want of discrimination which the creature shows in its own feeding. It will devour with equal avidity human flesh or decayed vegetable matter; whilst its known predilection in favour of the sewers is enough to nauseate the most unscrupulous appetite. But it may at least be urged that whilst the rat is on shipboard it is free from the contamination of the drain-pipe; and as to its indelicacy of feeding, it cannot surely be worse or more debauched in its taste than the hog or the duck, or a great many other animals which are reckoned very choice eating indeed. Different nations have different palates, and amongst the Chinese and other eastern races the rat is considered so much of a dainty that it is no uncommon circumstance for a vessel entering one of the ports of the Celestial Empire to be boarded by a party of natives who come to offer money for permission to hunt the ship in search of the animals. During the siege of Paris, rats were consumed in prodigious quantities, and one of the luxuries of that dreadful time was a rat-pie made with mushrooms.

The rat on board ship, as elsewhere, has a disagreeable trick of getting into the most untoward places. Herman Melville in one of his books describes how, after he had long been eating molasses from a certain jar, he discovered a rat lying smothered in the stuff; whilst one of the commonest things possible is to find the creature drowned in the scuttle-butt which holds the fresh water, or hopelessly wedged into a tierce of beef that is opened to replenish the harness-cask. A case was quite recently reported by one of the shipping papers in which the water-tanks of a vessel newly arrived from the antipodes, on being emptied and cleared out, were found to contain the skeletons of many dozens of the creatures, so that the crew were startled by the discovery that for the whole voyage home their water had been tainted with an infusion of rats. Yet the health of all on board had been wonderfully good during the passage, nor had the least disagreeable

taint been apparent in the water beyond the flavour of the brine used to preserve it. Such is the effect of the imagination upon the bodily health, that had the crew *known* they were drinking from a cistern full of dead rats, the flavour of the water would have been found most repugnant, and possibly a good deal of sickness would have been reported upon the ship's arrival.

The seafaring rat is not as a rule of such a ferocious disposition as his brother rodent of the sewers. Sailors when on long and tedious voyages, such as a whaling cruise, will often make pets of them, training them to come up out of the hold at certain hours to be fed. We knew of one old sailor who used regularly to sleep with a rat in the clews of his hammock, till one night he was rudely awakened by being precipitated to the deck. He at first imagined his shipmates had been playing a very common forecastle prank upon him; but he discovered, on examining the lanyard which had suspended his hammock, that the sharp teeth of his favourite rat had gnawed right through it. This was the occasion of a little coolness between them.

Many are the stories of rats on board ship which might be told were there space; but one more must now suffice. A vessel lying moored in the river Hooghly neglected the usual precaution of unbending sails, and kept her canvas furred upon the yards. She stayed at Calcutta for about a fortnight. When she was ready to get under way, sail was of course made; but imagine the astonishment of all on deck when the gaskets had been cast off and the canvas dropped loose, at seeing a perfect shower of rats fall squeaking through the air! The various sails in which the animals had harboured themselves were nibbled through and through, so as to resemble sieves, and were rendered so perfectly useless that the vessel could not leave until fresh ones had been bent in their place. For what reason the rats should have taken to the rigging, or how they managed to get aloft, was a speculation which, but for his vexation at the loss of his sails, the captain might well have amused himself in trying to solve.

THE OLD BARGE.

By THOMAS ST E. HAKE.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.—ALONGSIDE.

ON the river-bank, a mile above Battersea Bridge, there once stood—it stands there no longer—a small thatched house. It was constructed of wood; and the two diamond-paned windows, one on each side of the porch, looked out upon the Thames. The house was not accessible at all hours. At high-tide the garden was sometimes under water; and there were times—though these were fortunately of rare recurrence—when the whole structure threatened to get under weigh and take a seaward course with the ebb. But when the tide was out there was an impassable barrier of mud betwixt it and the water's edge. Between tides was the best moment for landing. A few rugged stone steps led up from the bank to a gateway facing the porch.

One evening, about the hour of sunset, a young girl came out into the garden, stopped at the gateway, and looked down at a barge moored alongside. It was an old barge, long and narrow: a 'one-horse' canal barge, that had seen its best days, and was now leading an amphibious existence, rising when the water rose, and sinking reposefully upon mud and slime when the water fell. It had marks of wet-rot upon it, and of dry-rot too. Time and tide had carried away every vestige of paint from its sides long ago.

On board this barge were seated two men. One of them was old, the other young. The latter, seated upon the upper deck, or cabin roof, was making a large net, which hung over the cabin door between him and his companion. He was a dark-skinned young man, with something of the gipsy in his appearance. He had black watchful eyes, when no one else's eyes were bent upon him; but when he thought himself observed—and he was keenly suspicious—all his senses seemed concentrated upon the net-work in hand. The old man, who was sitting in the stern, smoking a short clay pipe, appeared completely lost in thought. He was staring down-stream, towards Battersea Bridge; but it was obvious that he saw nothing—nothing of the light craft that floated to and fro—except in an absent-minded, dreamy way. He was a small-featured, weather-beaten bargee, with a white beard, and thick white eyebrows; and the deep lines at the corners of his eyes expressed a certain degree of cunning. There were deeper lines across the brow, which gave a care-worn, anxious look to the face. His broad muscular frame had, to all appearance, lost none of its strength; and he had large bony hands, which had a peculiar grasping tendency. But frequent work at the tiller, the handling of ropes, barge-hooks, and barge-oars for so many years, might account for this.

'Grandfather,' said the girl, after watching the two men for a moment in silence, 'you'll come in and sup with us to-night; won't you?'

The man gave a slight start at the sound of her voice. 'Why,' said he—'why should I come in to-night? Come now.'

'It's my birthday,' replied the girl, half apologetically.

'Ah!' and the old man glanced towards his companion, whose eyes, happening to be bent upon him, were at once cast down upon the net. 'What do *you* say, John?'

'I?' and he flashed a look at the old man and then at the girl. 'I'm not invited.'

At this moment the sound of sculls, falling with a soft plash upon the water, attracted their attention. They all looked quickly round. A light skiff, rowed by a handsome young fellow, pulled into the little creek where the barge was lying, and came alongside. 'Good-evening!' and the boatman, speaking in a cheery voice, raised himself into the barge and attached his skiff to the iron ring. 'Good-evening, all!—Bertha,' he added, looking up with an eager face towards the girl—'look!' and he pointed to a little scarlet flag that was fluttering in the stern of his boat. 'Brand-new, and hoisted in honour of the occasion. Happy returns!'

The girl's face had brightened at sight of the boat. The boatman's voice brought a look of

radiance into her eyes. They were large eyes, that contained something more than mere gratitude for his words. She reddened slightly as she said: 'Thank you, Davy;' and added: 'You'll stay and take some supper with us to-night?' Her look and tone expressed more than an invitation; it seemed like an appeal.

'Ay,' the old bargeman chimed in, 'Davy will stay.' Then glancing at the net-maker, he said: 'Come, Morison! you're invited too, you know. Go and keep them company.'

John Morison, never raising his eyes, never ceasing to work at the net, answered: 'You're not going to sup indoors, are you, Mr Landrick? I've never known you do it, birthday or no birthday. Very good. Then I shan't, and that settles the matter.'

As Davy Rotherford stood there, looking at these two men, an odd thought crossed his mind. What had put the idea into his head, and why it should come to him at such a moment, he could not comprehend. He had seen these men seated there scores of times before. He had seen Morison making nets, and always in the same attitude, ever since Landrick had brought his barge alongside and settled down here to pass his remaining days within sight of his own home. Perhaps it was something in these men's expressions, something in their attitudes towards each other. He could not say; but he saw in this swarthy young net-maker a quaint resemblance to a dark spider spinning a web; and he saw in the old bargeman an unconscious victim, who would presently get caught in the toils.

'Ah, well,' said Landrick, evidently displeased at Morison's refusal. 'Please yourself, John!—Run up to the house, Davy, and cheer up grandmother. She's a bit low-spirited, Bertha says. I shall stop o' board. It has been my habit for nigh upon fifty years; and habit is second nature. At my time o' life a man can't alter his habits, bad or good. He can only drift, as we say, with the tide.'

Bertha had already gone in; and Rotherford now followed. The room which he entered from the porch, without crossing hall or passage, was a low-pitched kitchen supported by oak beams overhead. The furniture was antique. A great clock, resembling a sentry-box, stood between the window and door, with the date upon its cracked and yellow face. The chairs were of dark oak, with bars in their backs like prison gratings. In one of these chairs was seated, beside a smouldering fire, a gray, wrinkled woman bent with age. She looked up quickly, as though startled out of a nap, as the young man closed the door.

'Who's that?' said she, shading her eyes with her hand. 'What's the matter? The tide ain't ebbing yet, is it?'

'Why, Mrs Landrick,' said Rotherford, 'don't you know me? I'm David—Davy Rotherford, your old favourite. Ain't you glad to see me?'

The woman's face softened. 'Come in, Davy,' said she—'come in. I thought it was Morison: I was dreaming about him. That's how it was. He's aboard with Landrick, ain't he?'

'Yes; and too busy net-making,' said Rotherford, 'to leave his work.—Why, how,' he added, as his odd thought suddenly recurred—'how does he happen to be troubling *your* dreams?'

A listening look became intently expressed in Mrs Landrick's whole attitude. 'Wait, Davy,' said she significantly—'wait! The tide ain't ebbing yet.'

Rotherford was standing with his eyes bent upon the woman. He was trying to put some clear construction upon her words. Suddenly he looked round and caught sight of Bertha Landrick standing at an inner door. Her face was so changed—so pale and expressive of alarm—that he took a quick step towards her, for she seemed on the point of falling. But she recovered almost before he reached her side, and lifted her finger to her lips to enforce silence. He sat down at the supper-table without a word; and Bertha began to busy herself in getting some provisions into a basket for her grandfather. Glancing presently towards the old bargeman's wife, Rotherford was surprised to find that the woman had relapsed into her drowsy state, with her head bent forward over the fire, and her hands clasped upon her lap.

Rotherford was the son of a master-lighterman. He was employed all day in his father's office; and of an evening was usually out upon the river. Landrick had served his father in his earlier days, and Rotherford had been for many a journey on river and canal with the bargeman when a boy. They had always been on friendly terms; and since Bertha had budded into womanhood, it would seem that Davy's visits by no means diminished.

As he sat there to-night, eating his supper with an appetite after his vigorous row up stream, he was greatly concerned when observing that Bertha would eat nothing. That unaccountable appearance of anxiety was still expressed in her restless eyes and pale cheeks. He longed to question her; but she scarcely remained at table two minutes at a time. Her thoughts seemed all the while to be centred in her grandfather; for she was constantly hurrying out to the barge to see if he needed anything. Davy found it impossible to get a word with her; and he had many words to speak of—words he had rehearsed over and over again to the quick dip and plashing tune of his sculls.

Bertha had gone down to the barge for the twentieth time at least, leaving Rotherford alone with the drowsy old woman. Mrs Landrick awoke suddenly, as she always made a point of doing, and glanced eagerly round. The red glow of the setting sun, looking aslant through the window, touched her face. 'Not night yet?' she muttered, blinking her eyes in the glare of sunlight—'Not night yet? I dreamt it was quite dark—dreadful dark, and that the tide was ebbing fast.—Where's Bertha?'

'On board the barge,' said Rotherford, crossing to the window. 'She'll be back directly.'

Mrs Landrick looked quaintly at the young man. There was a puzzled expression on her face. 'Davy,' said she, 'I dreamt that the barge was gone—that my old man was gone—and then—and then I awoke.'

'Gone?' said Rotherford, with a smile. 'Do you mean sunk?'

'I don't know,' said the woman. 'Gone—disappeared. I can't get the dream out of my head! I've had the dream before: it's the second time since daybreak. Can there be anything wrong?'

Look out, Davy. Is the old barge alongside?

'Yes, yes. It's lying snugly alongside,' said he. 'There's nothing wrong. But it's nearly high tide,' he added, 'and time for me to be getting home. Good-night, Mrs Landrick.'

'Good-night, Davy. You're sure the tide ain't ebbing yet?'

'Quite sure.'

When Rotherford reached the barge and stepped on board, he found that Morison had taken his leave. There was no spider; but the web lay spread across the deck. Bertha was in the cabin, putting a match to her grandfather's stove; and the old bargeman was busying himself with trimming his lamp for the night.

'So you still sleep on board, Mr Landrick?' remarked the young man.

'Ay, ay,' was the reply.

Rotherford looked thoughtful. 'Now, wouldn't it,' he persisted, 'at your time of life be safer to sleep indoors?'

The bargeman glanced suddenly round: 'Where's the danger here?'

'Oh, I was merely going to remark,' Rotherford hastened to explain, 'that you might find your house, perhaps, preferable to an old barge! The river-fogs and cutting winds are apt to get at one, you know, when the winter comes round. That's all.'

The girl was still bending down over the stove. She looked up with a thankful face at Rotherford. 'You are right, Davy,' said she—'I am sure you are right.'

'Davy,' said the old bargeman, as he lit the lamp and fastened it on its hook overhead, 'I've been used to this sort of life, as I've often told you, ever since I was a lad. And there's another thing I've told you,' he added, 'many a time—a man can't change his habits at my age. He must drift along with the tide.'

The sun had set; but it was still broad daylight, with a deep glow over the sky. It was an autumn evening; and a chilly wind fled across the river with a shivering sound and died away. The cry of some water-fowl in its flight over the marshes reached their ears, and that too died away. Was the night likely to prove a stormy one? In the upper sky the clouds were motionless, but their distorted shapes expressed commotion.

The desire on Rotherford's part to speak with Bertha, since he saw that it was equally her desire to speak with him, became intense; and as he lowered himself over the side of the barge and she went forward to loosen the rope, he seized the moment to whisper: 'Bertha! what is troubling you?'

She glanced about her with that look of dread again in her eyes. 'I cannot tell you now,' said she hurriedly. 'Grandfather will think there's something amiss if he hears us talking together. I'll try,' she added, 'though I can't promise—I'll try to come to you before the twilight is gone. Will you wait for me?'

'You know I will!' and he pressed her hand to his lips. Then he quickly added: 'At the old ferry steps?'

The girl nodded. The boat was detached; and with a turn of the sculls Rotherford was out in the tide. He rowed quickly down stream. Not

that there was any need for so much haste; for even had Bertha been able at once to slip away by the little pathway behind the house, she could not have reached the ferry steps before him. But Davy was naturally impetuous; and the mere thought of seeing Bertha, of speaking with her alone, impelled him to pull vigorously at his sculls. In a few minutes he reached the ferry steps, attached his boat, and walked up and down by the river-side, waiting impatiently for her. It was a deserted, lonely spot. For since Battersea Bridge had been built, the ferry had fallen into disuse, and few people passed this way. But it was a spot which Rotherford loved. He and Bertha had met here many a time. It was here that he had avowed his love for her; it was here that she had given him her promise that she would one day be his wife.

He was troubled about Bertha to-night. The strange look of dread upon her face, which he had never seen there before, sorely perplexed him. Was some peril at hand? He could comprehend nothing; his brain was crowded with a hundred odd fancies, that flashed upon him and took to flight, and came back again, only bringing bewilderment and a deeper state of anxiety concerning her.

Nearly half an hour had passed, and he had begun to despair of Bertha's coming; for it was beginning to grow dusk, and he knew that when the twilight was gone he must give up all hope of seeing her. But in the midst of these despondent thoughts he descried her pretty figure hurrying along the pathway. He hastened forward to meet her.

'Davy,' said the girl, answering his inquiring look, 'it's about grandfather I'm worried. A danger threatens him. I have come to tell you what it is. You will help me—will you not?'

He answered her earnestly: 'Dear Bertha! you know I will. Tell me what this trouble is.'

They sat down side by side on the ferry steps. Rotherford took the girl's hand, and looked with eager interest into her uplifted face. The twilight was fast fading out of the sky; and the gusts of wind that came across the Thames ruffled the water, and rocked Rotherford's boat as it lay close by with the tide lapping at its sides. With scarcely a pause and in a low hurried tone, Bertha explained to David Rotherford the cause of her distress.

'I'm going to tell you something,' said she, 'that grandfather believes is only known to himself and me. He is wrong. His secret is known to others. It is known to those who can and will injure him, as I fear, before daybreak—unless,' she added, 'you remain on guard all the night through. Can I ask you to do that?'

'Why, Bertha,' said Rotherford, 'do you think that would be a hardship to me? You do not know how deeply I love you.'

An expressive sigh escaped Bertha's lips. 'Davy,' said she, 'I will tell you everything. Ever since grandfather brought the old barge alongside the home, as you know he has led the same life on board as when he was an active bargeman making journeys up and down canals. He cannot change his habits, as he is always reminding us. The cabin is his home, and the little stove his fireside. How often have I seen

him seated there, smoking his old clay pipe, and looking as though he would scorn to change places with a Prince! He has been a very sober, thrifty man; and during his long lifetime he has saved a good deal of money. In his cabin on board the barge there is a small cupboard, and in this cupboard, locked up in a strong iron box, are all his savings—quite a little fortune.—Now, listen! If he is robbed of this, Davy, he and grandmother will be destitute. At least,' she added, 'they will probably be dependent upon me—upon the little that I can earn—for their support. For grandfather will be too broken to go on making or mending nets, as he does now. Indeed, I scarcely dare think what would happen to him if the mere dread of any such disaster crossed his mind.' As Bertha whispered these words there was fear in her look and tone.

Rotherford sat for a moment silent, staring intently over the darkening river, deep in thought. Suddenly he started up. 'You suspect some one,' he said; 'you know that a plot is hatching to rob your grandfather. Yes, and I can name the man.'

'Stay!' said Bertha. Rising hastily, she placed her hand upon his arm. 'Don't breathe his name, not even in my ear. The very thought of him frightens me. He may be listening, as I always think he is, in hiding hard by. He haunts me; and grandmother, as you must have noticed to-night, is haunted by him too.—Now, Davy,' the girl went on, 'I'm going to tell you something strange.' Her hand was still upon his arm, and her scared face still raised to his in the growing dusk. 'When it is high tide,' said she, 'the water lies close under our windows on the river-side; and often, the night being still, voices will come to us from the Thames and startle us out of our sleep, as a dream will sometimes do. It is sometimes a shout—possibly a warning of danger to some one—that wakes us. Sometimes it's a cry—a shrill cry of distress—that sets one's heart beating fast. But the voices that have meaning in them, speaking together as they go by with the tide, are the voices that frighten us most; and among these voices more than once we've heard his voice: we've heard enough to satisfy us that he's planning to rob grandfather of his gold; and it's to-night he's for carrying out his scheme. Davy! what shall we do?'

Rotherford took both the girl's hands in his own and tried to reassure her. 'Leave all to me! I will keep guard along the bank,' said he, 'and be within call of the old barge, until day-break. Be brave! Trust me, Bertha. Good-night.'

Bertha threw her arms about his neck without a word, and then she hastily left him and went back along the pathway to the thatched house.

It was now almost dark; and when Bertha entered the kitchen it was quite dark there; for the fire was almost out. But she managed to light the lamp by the smouldering embers, and with it in her hand she went through the rooms, only four in number, to assure herself that all was well before locking up the house for the night. In one of these rooms she found her grandmother sleeping; for Mrs Landrick always retired to bed at sunset, though she slept a good part of the day in her armchair by the fireside.

Bertha looked out of the window towards the place where the old barge was moored. Gusts of wind, louder and more frequent now, passed over the river; and the rain had begun to fall and beat against the panes. But the barge-lamp was burning steadily over the cabin door, and she felt satisfied that all was well on board.

She drew her grandmother's chair towards the fire and sat down to keep her guard within doors. She would not think of resting while Davy was out upon the Thames and on such a night. She would sit here till daybreak—till the danger was past, and then she would go down to the ferry steps to thank Rotherford for his watchfulness and devotion. She was exceedingly wakeful for an hour or more. She listened nervously to every gust of wind, as though she thought the voices that had frightened her on other nights might again reach her ear. But no sound of voices came; and gradually her eyelids drooped and her head sank upon her arm and she lay there fast asleep.

Suddenly a loud voice wakened her. It was a shout such as she had heard at night upon the Thames many a time before. But she started up with a cry upon her lips and ran to the window and looked out into the night. The light that she had seen burning steadily, before she fell asleep, was not visible now. She threw a cloak about her shoulders, took the lamp from the table, and hurried out. It was a pitch-dark night; and the wind and rain beat in her face. With difficulty she found her way to the water's edge. Raising the lamp over her head she looked down upon the dark river. A cry of despair escaped her—the old barge was gone!

LOVE.

STRANGE are his moods, and strange is he,

A child of divers ways:

He leads you on through flowery paths,

Through bright and golden days;

And guided by his gentle hand,

And listening to his song,

And gazing in his lovely eyes,

You walk for ever on.

And many pass you by, and they

Stretch out their hands in vain;

Some go with Death, and Sorrow some

Walk hand in hand with Pain;

And some with Scorn go laughing by,

And some who weep and moan:

But all of them young Love ignores,

And on they pass alone.

And through the pathways where they go

No ray of light appears;

No gleam of sunshine ever comes,

The way is wet with tears.

Sad for a moment, too, you grow,

And beg Love take them too:

He smiles, and shakes his golden curls—

'They cannot come with you.'

FLORENCE MALCOLM LEVEAUX.

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